CLAIMS:

1. A signaling method for use in setting up internet protocol network calls, wherein said internet protocol network comprises an application server for providing call feature processing, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving at an application server call information whereby said application server is inserted into a signaling path for said call;

determining, at said application server, whether said application server is required in the signaling path to complete call setup for said call; and

if said application server is not required in the signaling path to complete said call setup, said application server removing itself from the signaling path.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein said step of said application server removing itself from the call signaling path further comprises the step of:

transmitting an SIP REDIRECT message to a call control element.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein said step of said application server removing itself from the call signaling path further comprises the step of:

transmitting an SIP REFER message to a call control element.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein, if said determining step determines that said application server is required in said signaling path to complete call setup, said method further comprising the steps of:

said application server providing feature processing for said call; and

said application server thereafter determining that it is not required in said signal path to complete call setup and removing itself from the call signaling path.

5. The method of claim 4 wherein:

said step of said application server providing said feature processing further comprises the step of sending an SIP INVITE message to a call control element in order to invoke service of another network server; and

said step of said application server removing itself from the call signaling path further comprises the steps of sending to said call control element a) an SIP redirect message or SIP REFER message, and b) an SIP cancel to cancel said INVITE message.

6. The method of claim 5 wherein said another network server is a media server and wherein said invoked service is collection of caller input.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein said step of removing occurs prior to completion of call setup.

8. A signaling method for use in setting up internet protocol network calls, wherein said internet protocol network comprises an application server for providing call feature processing, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving at an application server a request for call feature processing for a call whereby said request inserts said application server in a signaling path for call setup;

said application server providing said call feature processing; and

said application server removing itself from said signaling path upon a determination that it is no longer required in said signaling path for call setup.

9. The method of claim 8 wherein said step of removing occurs prior to completion of call setup.

10. The method of claim 8 wherein said step of providing said call feature processing further comprises the step of:

determining a primary and alternate routing number for said call.

11. The method of claim 10 wherein said step of removing occurs immediately subsequent to said determining step.

12. The method of claim 8 wherein said step of providing said call feature processing further comprises the steps of:

determining a primary routing number for said call;

sending said primary routing number to a network element;

receiving an indication for an alternate routing number; and

determining said alternate routing number.

13. The method of claim 12 wherein said step of removing occurs immediately subsequent to said step of determining said alternate routing number.

14. A network node for providing call feature processing during setup of internet protocol network calls, said network node comprising of:

means for receiving call information;

means for determining whether said network node is required in a signaling path to complete call setup for said call; and

means for said network node removing itself from the signaling path if is not required in the signaling path to complete said call setup.

15. The network node of claim 14 wherein said means for removing further comprises:

means for transmitting an SIP redirect message to a call control element.

16. The network node of claim 14 wherein means for removing further comprises:

means for transmitting an SIP REFER message to a call control element.